

THE CARPENTER'S BOY.

"I wish to speak to Miss Lelia Vermont," said a carpenter's boy, as he entered a stately mansion in a fashionable street in New York, in 1830.

"Help yourself to a seat in the entry; you will be attended to presently," was the haughty reply. Then, turning to an individual with whom she had been conversing, and with a sneer (having noticed the lad to have some carpenter's tools in his hand) said, "I have such a dislike to speak to a mechanic. I hate to encounter one."

"Possibly he is on business," said the individual.

"Oh, I never speak to one except on business," was the reply. "He has come, I presume, to erect an arbour. We applied to Mr. Thomas this morning to have one built, and I take this to be his apprentice."

"Mr. Vermont, the father of Lelia, for this was the lady inquired for, was a merchant of good standing and owned considerable property; hence Lelia's haughty aristocratic pretensions to respectability. Had Mr. Vermont been the father of the carpenter's boy, Albert had no doubt occupied as lofty, and perhaps a much more prominent position in society than did the infatuated Lelia. But, alas! Albert was an orphan boy—a desolate stranger in a strange land.

"Pity he is only a mechanic," exclaimed Lelia, as she gazed with unspeakable delight on the green goose of a mechanic, as she deemed him. "If he had been a lawyer, or a professor of some sort, he might have been."

"A noble soul," interposed Mr. Shrivv, who was a professor, though not an aristocrat.

"I was going to say, from his appearance he might have merited"—

"Be cautious, Lelia."

"Allow me to express my sentiments; he might have merited the hand of one in the higher walks of life. A noble-looking lad he is, truly."

"But were he a lawyer, doctor, or professor, and indulging the views he now doubtless cherishes, my word for it, he would aspire to something noble."

"And where should he seek for noble spirits? but among the respectable classes of society?"

"Ah, Lelia, many a noble heart has throbbed beneath the leathern apron of the mechanic, as ever swelled beneath the silken vestments of the lawyer, doctor, or professor."

"Mr. Shrivv, I am surprised to hear you uphold such a low, vulgar, set of blockheads, all of whom you know to be as ignorant of

refinement as are the aborigines of the west."

"Not at all, Lelia."

"But who has ever heard of a mechanic being a great man?"

"I have. Name but Franklin, Fulton, Whitney, Watt, Arkwright, and a host of others I could mention—and where do you find their equals? The greatest men in the annals of the world, the men who have done the most to enlighten and advance the prosperity and liberties of the human race, have been mechanics."

"It is a menial employment, and beneath the station of a gentleman."

"Not so, Lelia; there never was a doctrine more untrue. They are almost the only professions that have subsistence, reality, and practical utility."

"I am sorry, Mr. Shrivv, to see you endeavour to elevate the mechanic to a level with respectable society."

"Why, Lelia, to the wise they are flood-gates of knowledge, and kings and queens are decorated with their handiwork."

Here the conversation was interrupted by a gentle rap at the door. The lad had become impatient, knowing that his employer would require a certain amount of work to be done. With a modesty seldom to be found in one of his sex, he requested Miss Lelia to give him some necessary directions relative to the locality of the labour. The professor left, and Lelia attended Albert to the garden. The arbour was soon finished, and the "carpenter's boy" was almost as soon forgotten.

About two years from the period of which we are speaking, Miss Lelia made a visit to Albany. The coach company, and those constituting her travelling companions, she was informed by the proprietor were to consist of Dr. W. P., Professor M., and a young mechanic, all of the city of New York. Lelia, while viewing the select company, was thrown into consternation by a wild shriek from the driver. "Leap, leap, leap for your lives!" resounded through the coach.

The horses had taken fright. They were descending a long hill. The driver, having lost all control over the noble animals, saw that it would be death to remain where he was, it could be but death to leap for life: he leaped. The gentlemen put open the door and threw themselves out in confusion, leaving Lelia, the only female in the coach, and the young mechanic to shift for themselves. Seeing this, the young man, who had previously attracted Lelia's attention, being the only male remaining in the coach,

proffered her assistance, which was most gladly accepted. Taking her in his arms, and placing his foot firmly against the side of the coach, he bounded so clearly upon the bank as to be entirely beyond the reach of danger: they escaped unhurt. The next moment the coach was dashed to atoms against a tree; the horses were caught soon after by some labourers on the road. Lelia was melted to tears by the unparalleled kindness of the stranger, who had proved himself a genuine friend in risking his life to save hers. Such disinterested friendship was beyond conception. She inquired his name.

"The carpenter's boy who built your arbour," replied he.

"Take this as the reward of your valour," said Lelia, tendering to him her own splendid gold watch.

"I have my reward," said he, respectfully declining the rich and valuable present.

"I pray you, then, not to decline accepting my address," placing her card in his hand, "that should you need a friend you may know where to find one."

They were within a short distance of Albany, and concluded to walk the remainder of the road. Lelia and Albert were the only passengers who were able to walk.

In a few days after this event, Lelia returned to New York, and Albert, as soon as he could arrange matters, established himself in business at Albany. His efforts were attended with success far beyond his most sanguine expectations. In all his dealings and associations with men, he had a single eye to the promotion of one principle, that "all men are born equal," and that inequality of respect should be awarded to men in proportion to their amount of virtue and intelligence.

Seven years had elapsed when Mr. Vermont's name was found among the list of applicants for the benefit of the insolvent law. This circumstance for a few days produced a slight change in the conduct of Lelia; but it was like the early dew which soon passed away. While she had fine apparel and plenty of money, she was not so circumscribed in the usual routine of pleasure. Retrenchment is, perhaps, the most difficult part with those who are reduced in circumstances, at least it appeared to be the most difficult part of the way to Mr. Vermont. How to descend from the lofty eminence of wealth and fashion, and to retire to obscurity and seclusion, he knew not. He had been too long the child of prosperity to bear adversity with fortitude. He had no profession: dig he could not, and to beg he was ashamed.

"Would to heaven," said he, in perplexity

of soul—"would to heaven I had been a mechanic!"

"La, pa!" said Lelia, "what has come over you? I have frequently heard you say that you would as soon be a boot-black as a mechanic of any sort; that it was a menial employment."

"I grant it, Lelia, but it was one of my fashionable errors. Were I a mechanic, now that my fortune is gone, that my riches have taken to themselves wings, my trade would be a resource."

"Have you forgotten having spoken of mechanics as a presuming set of blockheads, who you said stalked about the streets with their tools with as much *sang froid* as a lawyer with his books, or a doctor with his instruments?"

"No, I have not forgotten, but I have abandoned, totally abandoned, my former erroneous sentiments. I have very recently discovered that there exists no difference between the books of a lawyer and the tools of a mechanic, save that the latter requires the exertion of the hands, and the former that of the head; they equally promote the operator's design, though I believe the mechanic contributes more to the public good and the public prosperity."

It was deemed expedient by Mr. Vermont to retire with his family from the fashionable street and mansion in which they resided. Every vestige of splendour being now gone, it was with a feeling of relief that the husband and wife sat down together to lay plans for the future. They determined to, and eventually did, take lodgings in a respectable boarding-house, where there was a single transient boarder besides themselves. This gentleman, they were informed, was from Albany, and would remain but a week or ten days at most, having come to the city to purchase some articles of merchandise which were not to be found at Albany.

The dinner-bell rang, and the little group assembled in the diminutive dining-room, the new comers were introduced collectively to Mr. Albert Orville, who at once recognised Lelia. Dinner passed in a very agreeable manner. Mr. Vermont, having just retired from mercantile life, could speak of the turmoil attendant thereon, the losses through failure and fluctuations of the market, of the restless anxiety, of the tortured state of mind incident to such as engaged in it—all of which Mr. Orville was a perfect stranger to; consequently to him it was an interesting subject, inasmuch as he was preparing to embark in a mercantile career.

To Lelia 'twas a luxury to gaze upon this self-made nobleman of nature, rather than to feast upon the choicest viands before her.

His light but elegant frame, evidently spirit worn, a pale, intellectual face, ever beaming with the beauty of an ardent soul, a forehead singularly fair and high, a well-formed head, a calm and graceful address; all were objects of admiration to the wondering Lelia.

The limits we have allotted to this narrative will not admit of minute detail of circumstances; let it suffice that Mr. Orville's stay was protracted some four or five weeks beyond the appointed time for his departure, in consequence of a growing attachment between himself and Lelia. Duty, however, called him to dash away for a time the cup of happiness he longed to drain to the bottom.

Six months after this period, Mr. Orville returned to replenish his store; but more especially to suggest the following propositions to Mr. Vermont.

First, the union of himself and Lelia (having obtained her consent by letter).

Second, to offer Mr. Vermont the management of his store, having learned his difficulties.

The first of these the old man acceded to with evident pleasure, but when Orville commenced and said,

"Now, my purpose is, if you will accept of it without attributing to me a selfish motive, to remove your entire family to Albany, where you shall during life lack none of your comforts, if they can be obtained by honest industry—"

This astonishing intelligence was more than the good man was prepared to receive, and he was completely overwhelmed in a flood of tears—tears of unspeakable gratitude. The old lady, rubbing her hands, with an occasional ejaculation of "Heaven be praised!" while Lelia sat motionless, too full to utter a word.

"What! oh say!" exclaimed the old man, "who can this generous benefactor be?"

"Possibly, my fond, my faithful Lelia can tell," said Mr. Orville, as he handed Lelia her own card.

A glance was sufficient. "Is it possible!" exclaimed Lelia. "Is it the Carpenter's boy?"

"Yes," he answered, in accents of love, as he pressed her to his bosom, "it is the Carpenter's boy."

"And the preserver of my life," she added.

"May he be the sweetener of it too," continued the old man.

The scene that followed the above may possibly be vaguely imagined by the reader, for I shall not attempt to describe it, lest I do it injustice.

The latest accounts from Albany are highly favourable. Everything goes swimmingly under the new arrangement. The old gentleman is in the store; Albert superintends an extensive business; and Lelia's firstborn, although called after her father, seldom goes by any other name than "THE CARPENTER'S BOY."

GEORGE CRABBE.

CRABBE has been called "the poor man's poet," because his muse chose chiefly to dwell among the scenes of humble life. "Poor man!" How often we apply the name to the wrong persons, forgetting that poverty is a comparative term. The possessor of thousands a year, whose wants exceed his means, is poor. The operative, with his hard-won weekly earnings, may enjoy all the pleasures of competence. With a "Martha Makepeace" to welcome him to his neat and cheerful home, and THE WORKING MAN'S FRIEND to instruct and enliven his evening hours, he has enjoyment, real and substantial, such as many a lord might well envy. Cheap literature has brought within the reach of the working classes the most precious thing and the greatest luxury which wealth can buy. Knowledge may now be theirs, and theirs all the refining tastes which come with it—tastes which are a blessing in themselves, and add a fresh charm to everything else, developing the poetry which lurks in every

loving heart, and hovers over every happy home.

Crabbe's early home was a humble one, and not so happy as humble homes often are, and as all homes should be. His father was collector of salt duties at Aldborough, in Suffolk, which is described as being, in these days, a "poor and wretched place." Here the poet was born, on the Christmas-eve of 1754. The salt-master was a man of violent and imperious temper, whose presence brought storm as often as sunshine into his household. It is a sad thing when an unoffending child learns to tremble at the sound of a father's footstep. George, however, had a refuge in the unflinching kindness of a meek and loving mother. The entire companionship of the gentle mother and her gentle boy is a touching picture. These were not the days of "People's Editions," or sound cheap periodical literature; so the poor lad's opportunities of acquiring knowledge were scanty enough. Nevertheless George early showed